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Information and communication technologies for development

Note verbale dated 21 July 2015 from the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to transmit herewith the report of the Chair of the International Conference on "New Scenarios of Political Communication in the Digital Sphere — 2015", held in Havana from 5-7 June 2015 (see annex), and would be grateful if you would have the present note verbale and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 16.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 21 July 2015 from the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

International Conference on "New scenarios of political communication in the digital sphere — 2015"

Report of the Chair

The Chair of the International Conference on "New Scenarios of Political Communication in the Digital Sphere — 2015", held from June 5th to 7th in the Havana Conference Centre, welcomes the intensive and interesting discussions that took place between more than one hundred official delegates and experts from 34 countries and international organizations.

During these three days, key topics that concern all States were discussed, such as the use of information and communications technology (ICT) for the human, political, economic, social and cultural development of our societies; the technological sovereignty of nations; cybersecurity and Internet governance, as well as other problems related to these topics.

The ideas discussed and the national experiences that have been shared here constitute concrete recommendations for the participating countries, organizations and regional integration mechanisms. We expect that they will make a substantial contribution to the review of the ten-year history of the World Summit on the Information Society.

In that regard, we believe that:

- Greater regional and international consensus and more effective action by all States are indispensable for building a more just, equitable and socially inclusive information and knowledge society.
- We must continue struggling to eliminate the obstacles facing developing countries. The exercise of the fundamental rights to health, education and life remains beyond reach for millions of people throughout the world. Challenges such as these cannot be viewed in isolation from those arising from the development and global application of ICT. States must treat both groups of challenges equally in terms of their efforts and responsibilities in this regard.
- The digital divide is an issue that must not be put off, and is nothing other than the reflection of growing economic, political and social inequalities. We warn against the dangerous tendency to assess the digital divide exclusively on the basis of the amount of technology applied instead of the manner in which it is applied, consistent with the needs of each country.
- ICT development has become a cornerstone for the security of States. This must be interpreted from the sociocultural perspective as distinct from strictly utilitarian approaches, and conceived as a strategic practice that in its broadest sense would complement as well as guide political processes.
- ICT, per se, solves none of the problems countries are faced with, and so must be a means to an end instead of an end in itself. That is why a new ethical and transparent form of communication and education concerning the use of ICT

should be promoted, by means of strategies that motivate the new generation to develop a proactive approach and a critical understanding of reality.

- Work must be done to promote a firm commitment of educational systems to the teaching of communications, computer science and the Internet, using new pedagogical methods similar to those of popular education, as well as to regional and international cooperation in this field.
- ICT must be used to increase the knowledge capacity of peoples and develop their human capital. There is great risk of its being used for harmful purposes and not for the sake of the economic, cultural and political sustainability of nations.
- The resources allocated to the military sector must be used in the development of the computerization of societies and consistent with each country's progress.
- ICT must be considered as a substantial and incidental part of the most important development goals and objectives, and must play a greater role in the post-2015 development agenda.
- Work must be done to generate original content, which offers great opportunities for the promotion of heritage and cultural exchange among all countries.
- Civil society must participate in the decision-making process concerning these issues and must contribute to the design of research projects for the defence of technological sovereignty and collaboration platforms for the development and production of region-specific content.
- Concrete, effective and urgent cooperation measures must be adopted to counteract the growing militarization of cyberspace and the covert and unlawful use of computer systems to attack other States. These measures must be consistent with the social policies, principles and regulations agreed upon at the national and international levels.
- International cooperation must be strengthened to combat harmful use of the Internet, in particular cyberterrorism, cybercrime, and the propagation of xenophobia and racism, among other trends.
- Cyberspace sovereignty must be respected and hegemony opposed, particularly by discarding double standards regarding cyberspace security.
- We must work together so that the Internet becomes a zone of peace and prosperity and so that these issues are broadly discussed in the United Nations framework.
- Unilateral measures against States that impede universal access to the benefits of ICT must be strongly condemned, as such measures run counter to international law.
- We must express our concern regarding the nearly complete absence of international regulations concerning the Internet and cybersecurity, which leads to very harmful collateral effects on the peaceful and development-oriented use of ICT. We urge the preparation of an international code of conduct, to be approved and recognized by States.
- We must denounce and work to avoid the use of ICT for subversive, political, military and criminal purposes such as the theft or hijacking of information in cyberspace.

- People must be provided technical and scientific training with an awareness of risks in the area of cybersecurity.

- Cybersecurity cannot be considered from a solely technological perspective, as if it were nothing more than wires and computers. The reaffirmation of a decolonizing consciousness, through the production of our own cultural content on the web, is more important than the development and control of our infrastructures.

- Cyberspace and access to the Internet must be regarded as strategic resources and the common assets of all humankind.

- Hastening the discussion of Internet governance is vital, as that is one of the topics on which less progress has been made since the World Summit on the Information Society.

- It is therefore necessary to reiterate that Internet governance must be international, democratic and participatory in character, based on the Charter of the United Nations, international law and multilateralism.

- Greater participation of States in the management of the Internet is recommended, so as to design global policies, guarantee the stable, sustained and safe functioning of the Internet on the basis of international law, and increase the level of coordination among international institutions.

- Greater cooperation in the area of information and communications technology must be fostered between all countries, on equal terms.

- The management of critical Internet resources must be fostered in a cooperative manner and free from the control of monopolies. We must have an exchange on the best practices and alternatives for regional and international cooperation in order to promote the creation of root servers, the use of free software and sovereign fibre.

- Establishing intergovernmental agreements is vital in order to guarantee Internet security and achieve a peaceful, safe, open and cooperative cyberspace.

- States must invest in broadband, and strengthen their cooperation in the context of all the collaborative mechanisms to which they belong, with regard to connectivity and the generation of their own content, for the purpose of counteracting hegemonic influences.

- The technological and operational sovereignty of all nations must be guaranteed at the international level.

- We must confirm the need to create an international Internet security system that recognizes, among other things, the urgency of assessing a new Internet architecture.

- We must reiterate that the agreements of the World Summit on the Information Society that have not been implemented must be ratified.

In keeping with the spirit of the recommendations set out in this report, as well as in conformity with the proposals made repeatedly in the conference, the Chair of the International Conference on "New Scenarios of Political Communication in the Digital Sphere — 2015" will send this text to the United Nations Secretariat as an effective contribution to the follow-up to the agreements of the World Summit on the Information Society, as well as other regional integration mechanisms.